

Daytona International Speedway, Daytona, FL
27 Feb 10

The weather was not what everyone had hoped for to kick off the season. It was cold, gray, dreary, and wet. Despite nature's foul mood, the Sterling, Virginia based RnR Repsol Racing Team and riders, Krishna Pribadi and Jason Gibbons, persevered and conquered Daytona International Speedway aboard their Repsol Kawasaki ZX636.



Returning from last year's overall runner up in the ASRA Team Challenge Michelin Pro Series, RnR Repsol Racing ended up finishing third in the GTU class, and 8th overall.

Prior to the race, Krishna Pribadi took up the first two rounds of practice in the middle weight group, and got the bike dialed in. Then, Jason took the reigns and took the bike out in the Team Challenge practice group. Unfortunately, as the meteorologist predicted, the skies began to fall on Jason in the middle of his practice, setting afoul his rhythm. This consequently caused him to lose control on the fourth lap, lowsiding in turn 5, the west horseshoe. Fortunately, Jason was alright. He picked up the bike and rode back to the garage, where the team assessed the damage. To everyone's relief, they only found minor damages consisting of bruised up tail section body work and a loose rear brake line banjo bolt.

With the beginning of the rain, the team checked out the weather radar. The Florida peninsula was obscured by a big yellow blotch, indicative of precipitation likely to last the duration of the upcoming race. Daytona, being a track notorious for its aggressive wear on tires, caused the team to have some skepticism in the likelihood of rain tires lasting the length of a 250K endurance race. However, despite the team's fear of the unknown, they decided to run with the rain tires, hoping that the wet conditions would remain and the tires would hold up. If anything, they could change to DOT tires later, because it looked like everyone else was going to be running their one set of rain tires, too.

As first, second, and third call were announced, the team finished prepping the bike, but could not get the air bubble out of the rear brake line, causing a very spongy—nearly ineffective—rear brake. But, time was up, and Krishna Pribadi, who was about to start the race, accepted his fate and headed off to the drenched grid.

The warm-up lap revealed standing water in the middle of the straight between the west horseshoe and the left-hander onto the banking (Nascar 2). Continuing further down the road, a small creek appeared before the second right hander of the chicane. Finally, there was practically a lake at the exit, just before the banking of Nascar 3. But, all in all,

on the banking, traction was great, the tires didn't squirm, and the bike could be operated at wide-open throttle with good rider confidence.

Krishna gridded up on row 8 in the third slot, but about half of the registered entries chickened out and were AWOL. At the wave of the green flag, the race was off to a clean start, and Krishna jumped ahead, sitting in fifth position overall, right after turn one. Things were quite uneventful for most of Krishna's stint, during which he put down consistent lap times despite obscured vision due to the heavy rain and spray. However, he did report one off-track excursion in turn one due to his comfort with pushing the limits, causing him to miss a brake marker. Also, on lap 17 of 44, he got too happy with the throttle and nearly high-sided the bike in the west horseshoe, but saved it. At this point, he was first in the GTU class, and fourth overall, with number 38 and 41 trailing behind by about 40 seconds. Just before the half-way mark flag was signaled to the riders, the Repsol Kawasaki's gauge cluster illuminated, indicating the machine was low on fuel. He finished off one more lap, and signaled to the pits by sticking his foot out at the start and finish line. The pit stop, consisting of re-fueling the bike and a rider change, went smoothly, without any mistakes or hang-ups.

Upon completion of the bike's re-fueling, Jason took up the saddle and the bike was off. Jason, still shaken up from the earlier crash in practice, played it safe and rode at a slower pace. Although his pace was reserved, his lap times were consistent without extreme incidents, and he secured a respectable third in the GTU class and 6th overall.

Despite the extreme and challenging conditions Daytona offered, the team thoroughly enjoyed the race and camaraderie of their fellow racers, and was very happy to finish the race strongly. To everyone's surprise, the rain tires held up with barely any show of wear typical of a tire run at Daytona. Thank you, Dunlop engineers!

The team would like to thank RnR Cycles, Repsol Lubricants, Team Hammer, Dunlop Tires, Empire GP, Woodcraft, Under the Black Hat, Rudy Project, pit crew-members Tyndall Testerman, Joe, and John, and above all, the corner workers (who froze their butts off in the cold rain). The team owes a special thanks to Art Lohman with CSB Racing.

Stay tuned for round two of the ASRA Team Challenge Michelin Pro Series at Carolina Motorsports Park, Kershaw, South Carolina, this coming mid-April.

Stay safe and keep the rubber side down,
Team RnR Repsol Racing

